



## Food, culture, and human health in Alaska: An integrative health approach to food security

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### Abstract:

Multiple climatic and socioeconomic drivers have come in recent years to interfere with the ability of Alaska's 'bush' communities to achieve food security with locally available food resources. Livelihoods traditionally centered on the harvest of wild, country foods, are transitioning to a cash economy, with increasing reliance on industrially produced, store-bought foods. While commercially available foods provide one measure of food security, availability and quality of these foods is subject to the vagaries and vulnerabilities of a global food system: access is dependent on one's ability to pay; most importantly, perhaps these foods often do not fulfill many of the roles that country foods have played in these communities and cultures. This transition is having severe consequences for the health of people and viability of rural communities, yet in ways not always tracked by conventional food security methodologies and frameworks. This paper expands the discussion of food security, premised on an integrative model of health that links sociocultural, ecological, psychological, and biomedical aspects of individual and community health. We use the Alaska case to illustrate that if food security is to be understood as a matter of human health, then our definitions of and designs for food security must recognize food's multifaceted and often regionally nuanced role in creating positive health outcomes. (C) 2008 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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### Resource Description

#### Communication: ☒

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

#### Communication Audience: ☒

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker

#### Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

# Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Food/Water Security

## **Geographic Feature:**

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Rural, Urban

## **Geographic Location:**

resource focuses on specific location

United States

## **Health Impact:**

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

## **Mitigation/Adaptation:**

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

## **Population of Concern:** A focus of content

## **Population of Concern:**

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status, Racial/Ethnic Subgroup, Workers

**Other Racial/Ethnic Subgroup:** "bush" communities

**Other Vulnerable Population:** Subsistence hunters and fishers

## **Resource Type:**

format or standard characteristic of resource

Review

## **Resilience:**

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

## **Timescale:**

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

## **Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:**

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content

